



SIC Advocate of the Year Award

The SIC Advocate of the Year Award is presented to one or more Individuals who have advocated for School Improvement Councils in an exemplary manner within their spheres of influence.

2013 – Baron Holmes

As Research Director for the SC House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee in the late 1970s, Dr. Holmes spearheaded the research and analysis leading to the passage of the state's Education Finance Act (EFA) of 1977, which led to greater equalization of public school funding and created School Improvement Councils. During the celebration of the 35th year of SICs in South Carolina, Dr. Holmes was recognized as "the father of School Improvement Councils" in the state.

2012 – Fred S. Washington, Jr.

As a school board chairman, SC-SIC Board of Trustees member and former local SIC member, Mr. Washington has remained an unflagging supporter of the value of SICs. Under his leadership, the Beaufort County Board of Education established policies and protocols – the first of their kind in the state – to ensure regular and meaningful communication between the Board and SIC members.

2011 – Carrie Toney

Ms. Toney is the long time custodian at Lower Lee Elementary in Lee County. While the school's custodian has remained the same for many years, the principal changed often and Ms. Toney made sure that each new administration, along with new parent and community members, were well informed about the function and need for the SIC in this rural school.

2010 – Clara Heinsohn

Ms. Heinsohn was active in SICs when she was a classroom teacher and continued to be a supporter in her role as Research Director for the SC Senate. But never was she more active on behalf of SICs than in her role as SIC District Contact for the Charleston County School District.

2009 – Delores Gilliard and Carlos Primus

In addition to the Riley Award-winning work this principal/SIC chair team performed in their home school, they traveled to an at-risk district to mentor a principal, SIC chair and SIC members in ways to improve the effectiveness of their Council.

2008 – State Representative Robert Williams

Darlington County's representative in the SC House took an active role in fostering SIC activities in the Pee Dee region, spurring volunteers to get involved on the local and state levels, and also authored a resolution to recognize SICs in the SC General Assembly.

2007 – Donna Tinsley

As a parent, Ms. Tinsley served on School Improvement Councils at every level for many years. In her work life as staff to the SC House's Education and Public Works Committee, she consistently advocated for Councils with members of the House.

2006 – Mike Fanning

A long time educator, Mr. Fanning has always understood the importance of parent and community involvement in our schools. As Executive Director of the Olde English Consortium, he made sure all member school districts received training and enthusiastic support for their SICs.

2005 – Al Leonard and Jeff Nicholson

The leadership of this principal/SIC chair team led their school to be recognized with an Honorable Mention for the Riley Award – more than once. They took their knowledge on the road delivering workshops across the state on how to convene an effective SIC.

2004 – State Representatives Bill Cotty and Joel Lourie

The SC School Improvement Council was faced with the loss of state funding when these two members of the SC House – one Republican and one Democrat – stepped up to advocate with fellow House members to secure the needed funding and to bring positive understanding of the value of SICs to the SC General Assembly.

2003 – Joan Grimmatt

When Ms. Grimmatt became the SIC District Contact for Horry County Schools, the status of Councils in the district was mediocre at best. Together with local businessman and SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair, Bob Zuercher, she revitalized Council activity with trainings and leadership.